

# *Bright, Quick & Ready*

**Schools in San Bernardino County 1870s–1940s**

Exhibit Dates: February 5 – June 12, 2005 • Exhibit Place: REDLANDS  
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## Old schools, new exhibit

A new exhibit, “Bright, Quick, and Ready: Schools in San Bernardino County Schools, 1870s–1940s,” opens at the San Bernardino County Museum in Redlands on Saturday, February 5. The exhibit, based on objects from the museum’s permanent collections in history and archives, will run through June 12 and is free with general admission. Visitors will look inside a recreated circa 1899 classroom from Lugonia School in Redlands to learn about the types of books, desks, and educational aids students used to learn their lessons.

“Our county has a rich history related to education and this exhibit is an opportunity to learn more about it,” said Michele Nielsen, museum curator of history. “The title of the exhibit refers to students, teachers and schools and is taken from a quote found in the journal of John Brown Jr, who served as Superintendent of San Bernardino County Schools from 1872 to 1874. Brown took his responsibilities very seriously, recording his work, observations, and thoughts in his superintendent’s journal. A former teacher himself, he was dedicated to education.”

Brown often traveled long distances to visit schools, talk with teachers, and check on the progress of students. “Visited the Chino District School taught by our friend and true teacher, Mr. H. C. Brooke. Best attended school ever had in this district, more life, more ambition. Some smart pupils here, difficult to puzzle them in geography and arithmetic. Stayed over night with Mr. B at Mr. Mayhew’s—continued visit next day ‘til 10 O’clock when reluctantly took leave and started on another dreary and lonesome road, reflected again on the noble cause of education. Being alone, my soliloquies were undisturbed (John Brown Jr. journal, Dec. 18, 1872).”

Journal entries, photographs of classrooms, pupils, and schoolhouses, documents such as teaching credentials from the 1870s, curriculum guides, and sample tests are all part of the exhibit. Two special video presentations include a look at the history of Mission School in Redlands where students actively participated in experiential learning from the 1940s into the 1960s; and an interview with Fernanda Cruz, the first Latina teacher in the Redlands area, about her life and teaching experiences at Guasti and Mission School.

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**San Bernardino County Museum**

2024 Orange Tree Lane, Redlands CA 92374 • (909) 307-2669 • [www.sbcountymuseum.org](http://www.sbcountymuseum.org)

## *Bright, Quick & Ready (continued)*

In the exhibit, visitors can pen a letter to an important person and stamp it on the spot; play detective to uncover the mysterious identities of “inkwell,” “slate pencil” and reward of merit; doodle around with script, and design their own handwriting styles; compare what’s new with what’s old in modern school rooms; discover a method of writing that’s quicker and even more erasable than electronic writing; and show off their intelligence and knowledge with an 1899 eighth grade exam.

“A free education is one of our greatest privileges in America – and just about everyone can relate to going to school,” said Nielsen. “Adults and kids both recall their fondest school experiences. Seeing how things were done in the past makes the present more meaningful. In kind, this exhibit will have something for everyone, with delights aplenty and memories waiting to be remade.”

The San Bernardino County Museum is at the California Street exit from Interstate 10. The museum is open Tuesdays through Sundays and holiday Mondays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$6 (adult), \$5 (senior or student) and \$4 (child aged 5-12). Children under 5 and Museum Association members are admitted free. Parking is free, and the facility is handicapped-accessible. Lunch, snacks, and beverages are available at the museum’s Garden Café from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, visit [www.sbcountymuseum.org](http://www.sbcountymuseum.org) or call (909) 307-2669.

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